

### ***III. How Can I Care for Both of Us?***

#### **Introduction**

Sometimes we are so deeply concerned about the well being<sup>54</sup> (Click on Care Giving Tips) of the person for whom we are caring, that we forget our own needs. We “burn the candle at both ends” and become exhausted, emotionally stressed<sup>55</sup> or ill, compromising our own quality of life and our ability to care for our family member.

#### **Some Caregiver Do’s and Don’ts**

We owe it to ourselves and to our families to also maintain our own physical and emotional<sup>56</sup> health by:

1. Getting sufficient sleep<sup>57</sup>
2. Eating a healthy diet<sup>58</sup>
3. Exercising<sup>59</sup> and staying physically fit<sup>60</sup>
4. Choosing appropriate health care<sup>61</sup> professionals and having periodic health checkups;
5. Not abusing alcohol and drugs<sup>62</sup>
6. Spending social time with family and friends;
7. Pursuing our own interests;
8. Seeking support<sup>63</sup> from family, friends, professionals, or your religious advisor or joining peer support groups; and
9. Using appropriate in-home and community-based services.

Keep in mind that it is normal to feel angry, frustrated, or depressed from time to time. Caregiving<sup>64</sup> can be a difficult as well as a rewarding undertaking. If you are feeling stressed, angry, or depressed:

- Remove yourself from the situation by walking away, even if it’s just around the house;
- Talk to someone with whom you feel close
- Call a hot line
- Talk with your doctor or other health professional
- Write down your feelings in a journal

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<sup>54</sup> <http://www.nfcares.org/>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.mayohealth.org/home?id=6.3.1.4.1>

<sup>56</sup> [http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/ex\\_sg/SGFACS/Lateryrs/tips.htm](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/ex_sg/SGFACS/Lateryrs/tips.htm)

<sup>57</sup> [http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1998/498\\_sleep.html](http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1998/498_sleep.html)

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.ars.usda.gov/dgac/>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.aoa.gov/aoa/pages/agepages/exercise.html>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.aoa.gov/aoa/eldractn/fitfact.html>

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.ama-assn.org/aps/amahg.htm>

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.well.com/user/woa/>

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.caregiving.org/content/Links.asp>

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.mayohealth.org/home?id=HQ00261>

If you find that you frequently are angry or depressed or that your emotions are getting out of control, you may benefit from counseling, and/or get relief in the form of respite, caregiver support groups, and supportive in-home services.

### **Additional Resources and Reading Lists**

Visit the National Family Caregivers Association<sup>65</sup> web site for information on family caregiving.

Intelihealth<sup>66</sup> caregiver page will take you to several sites with helpful tips and information for caregivers, including information on caregiver stress and compassion fatigue.

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<sup>65</sup> <http://www.nfcacares.org/>

<sup>66</sup> <http://intelihealth.com/IH/ihIH/WSIHW000/9030/9030.html?k=zonex408x9030>